

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[035] A single integrated circuit microcontroller 10 including embedded erasable/programmable non-volatile memory 12 having a read protection. Microcontroller 10 can operate within a special mode in which external circuits may access memory 12 by use of input/output pins 18. When microcontroller 10 activates this special mode, a read protection flag 13 within memory 12 is checked. The read protection flag 13 may be set during production of the microcontroller 10 after instructional data or firmware has been installed onto memory 12. If the read protection flag 13 has been set, the contents of memory 12 are erased or reprogrammed prior to allowing access to memory 12. In this manner, external circuits cannot access instructional data or firmware that is stored in memory 12.

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